



**Cal OES**  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

*Fire and Rescue Division*



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# California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System

# Orientation

for the new:

# Fire Chief

**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
Governor

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Director, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

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NEW  
FIRE CHIEF  
ORIENTATION

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Brian S. Marshall, Fire Chief  
Fire and Rescue Branch

# New Fire Chief Orientation

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**Fire Chief's Orientation**  
to the  
**California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Fire and Rescue Division**  
and the  
**Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan**

California communities have historically relied upon mutual aid resources in combating fire and other emergency situations exceeding the capability of a single jurisdiction. Since 1950, the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement and the Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan have provided the basis for development of the statewide Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System.

Every segment of the fire service has contributed to the development and refinement of the system. Changes, when made have been based on service wide experience. With continued input and support of the fire services throughout the state, the system stands ready to mitigate the effects of human-caused and natural disasters.

### **The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services**

On January 1, 2009, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) merged with the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) under provisions set forth under Assembly Bill 38 and became the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA). In 2013, the agency was renamed the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES); herein throughout the remainder of this document, all current references to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) will now reflect the name change, Cal OES, while historical references will remain as OES and Cal EMA, respectively.

### **Introduction**

The California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan was first prepared and adopted in 1950 as Annex 3-C of the California State Civil Defense and Disaster Relief Plan. In 1970, the California Disaster Act was superseded by the California Emergency Services Act. In 1971, an updated California Emergency Plan was issued to serve as a basis for the conduct of emergency operations by all jurisdictions throughout California and for the development of up-to-date plans and procedures to fulfill local emergency preparedness responsibilities. The Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan is an extension of the California Emergency Plan. In 1978, and again in 1988, the Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan was reviewed and updated under guidance of the OES Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Board/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors.

### **FIRESCOPE Program**

The FIRESCOPE (Fire Fighting Resources of Southern California Organized for Potential Emergencies) program, was created by seven Southern California federal, state, and local fire agencies (partner agencies) after the disastrous wildland fires of 1970. The OES role was to assume operational responsibility as system components were completed. In 1980, the OES Fire and Rescue role expanded to assume full management responsibility for the program. Today, the Cal OES staff, who perform the

day-to-day functions at the OCC (Operations Coordination Center) for FIRESCOPE, are co-located with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Region III Headquarters in Riverside, California.

In September 1986, the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors was integrated with the Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee and now functions as a single entity. The name of this combined Committee is Cal OES Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors. This committee provides guidance in determining the nature and scope of services to be provided, and in developing operational policies. Membership represents all branches of the fire service: the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, State Fire Marshal, Bureau of Land Management, county, city, and volunteer fire departments, and fire districts. Special Advisors to the Committee are representatives from the California Professional Fire Fighters' Association and the California State Firefighters' Association.

In November 1987, the acronym for FIRESCOPE was changed to Fire Fighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies, to reflect the extension of FIRESCOPE products to Northern California. In concert with this change, the CALFIRMS Committee (California Fire Information Resource Management System) was renamed "Operations Team North" (January 1988), thus providing total continuity statewide. Included in the original FIRESCOPE Decision Process was the Operations Team (South), which has continued to function in the total Decision Process.

### **The Mutual Aid Plan**

The Mutual Aid Plan, basic and uncomplicated, is based on the concept of "self help" and "mutual aid". The State of California, all 58 counties, and nearly all city governments are signatory to a Master Mutual Aid Agreement. Mutual aid extended under this agreement and the operational plans adopted pursuant thereto shall be available and furnished in all cases of "local emergency", "state of emergency", and "state of war" as defined in the Emergencies Act. The Act also provides for exchange of mutual aid under any and all other circumstances.

The Plan provides for:

1. Systematic mobilization, organization, and operation of fire service resources of the state and its political subdivisions in mitigating the effects of disasters;
2. Comprehensive and compatible plans for the expedient mobilization and response of available fire service resources on a local, area, regional, and statewide basis;
3. Establishment of guidelines for recruiting and training auxiliary personnel to augment regularly organized fire personnel during disaster operations.
4. Annual update of fire service inventory of all personnel, apparatus, and equipment in California (STRESS Program);
5. A plan and communication facilities for the interchange and dissemination of fire-related data, directives, and information between fire officials of local, state, and federal agencies, and;

6. Coordination and implementation at state level of government (Chief, State Fire and Rescue Coordinator).

The California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement between the State of California, each of its counties, and those incorporated cities and fire protection districts signatory thereto:

1. Creates formal structure for provision of mutual aid;
2. Provides that no party shall be required to unreasonably deplete its own resources in furnishing mutual aid;
3. Provides that the responsible local official in whose jurisdiction an incident requiring mutual aid has occurred shall remain in charge at such incident, including the direction of such personnel and equipment provided through mutual aid plans pursuant to the agreement;
4. Provides that intra- and inter-area and intra-regional mutual aid operational plans shall be developed by the parties thereof and are operative as between the parties thereof in accordance with the provisions of such operational plans, and;
5. Provides that reimbursement for mutual aid extended under this agreement and the operational plans adopted pursuant thereto, shall only be pursuant to the state law and policies, and in accordance with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services policies and procedures.

### **Functional Organization**

The state is divided into six mutual aid regions to facilitate the coordination of mutual aid and other emergency operations. Fire Chiefs of each county (Operational Area) elect, from among themselves, an Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator. There are 65 Operational Areas: spread out in 58 counties, (six Areas in Los Angeles County, plus the Lake Tahoe Basin). Operational Area Coordinators are responsible for maintaining fire defense resource inventories, area mutual aid plan, and the dispatch of fire and rescue mutual aid resources. They are responsible for annual submission of fire and rescue resource inventories to Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinators. When a vacancy occurs or a term expires for an Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator, the Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator, working in cooperation with the organized County/ Operational Area Fire Chiefs' Association, will call for and, if necessary, conduct an election.

Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinators of each of the six mutual aid regions elect a Fire Chief, from within their respective region, to serve as Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator. Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinators are responsible for maintaining regional fire and rescue resource inventories, regional mutual aid plan, and for the coordination of intra-regional mutual aid. They are also responsible for the annual submission of fire and rescue resource inventories to the State Fire and Rescue Coordinator. When a vacancy occurs or term expires for a Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator, the State Fire and Rescue Coordinator (Chief, Cal OES Fire and Rescue Division) shall notify each Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator within the respective region that an election is pending. Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinators, are nominated by the Operational Area Coordinators, within the Mutual Aid Region.

Elections for both Regional and Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinators must be conducted at least once each three years. Elections may be held more frequently if necessary or desirable. It is not uncommon for incumbents to be reconfirmed annually.

The State Fire and Rescue Coordinator (Chief, Fire and Rescue Division) is a member of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Director's staff. The Chief is responsible for the California Fire Services and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan, coordination of inter-regional mutual aid, inventory of fire defense and rescue resources within the state, acquisition, deployment, and maintenance of Cal OES-owned fire and rescue apparatus and equipment.

## **Definitions**

Mutual Aid: An agreement in which two or more parties agree to furnish resources and facilities and to render services to each and every other party of the agreement to prevent and combat any type of disaster or emergency.

Mutual Aid is utilized when an incident is likely to exceed, or has exceeded, the ability of a responsible entity to control an incident. Mutual Aid is non-reimbursable and available to an incident which exceeds the local entity's capability. Agencies receiving mutual aid are responsible for logistic support to all mutual aid personnel and equipment received.

Agreement: Within the context of this document means the "Agreement for Local Government Fire and Emergency Assistance to the State of California and Federal Fire Agencies" and is referred to as the "**California Fire Assistance Agreement**". This agreement allows CAL FIRE and the Federal Fire Agencies (USFS, NPS, FWS, BIA, and BLM) to obtain State Cal OES and/or local government resources to provide structural fire protection or perform other tasks during control actions. CAL FIRE and the Federal Fire Agencies will generally use local agreements prior to exercising this agreement. (See California Fire Assistance Agreement 2009-2013)

Fire and Rescue Resources: Shall include, but not be limited to, the necessary personnel, apparatus, and equipment under the direct control of the fire and rescue service needed to provide mutual aid assistance for all emergencies.

Local Emergency: Shall mean the existence of conditions within the territorial limits of a local agency, in the absence of a duly proclaimed state of emergency, which conditions are a result of an emergency created by great public calamity.

State of Emergency: Often called Governor's Declaration, means the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the state.

State of War Emergency: The state or nation is under attack or impending attack. Gives the Governor the same powers as in State of Emergency and realigns State Government to State War Emergency Organization.

## Presidential Declaration:

**Major Emergency:** Any natural or man made catastrophe in any part of the United States, which requires federal emergency assistance to supplement state and local efforts to save lives and protect public health and safety or to avert or lessen the threat of a major disaster.

**Major Disaster:** Any natural or man made catastrophe, which, by the determination of the President, causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under the Disaster Relief Act.

## **Responsibilities - "How the system Works"**

### Local Fire and Rescue Administrator

Develops an effective emergency plan for use of the resources under its control and ensures that such a plan is integrated into the emergency plan of the Operational Area of which the Fire and Rescue Administrator is a part. Makes maximum use of existing facilities and services within each community prior to requesting assistance from neighboring jurisdictions. Directs all action toward stabilizing and mitigating the emergency, including controlling fires, saving lives, safeguarding property, and assisting other emergency services in restoring normal conditions.

### Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator

Organizes and acts as chairperson of an Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinating Committee composed of fire chiefs within the operational area. Organize, staff, and equip Area Fire and Rescue dispatch centers in accordance with the principles enumerated in the *California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan*. Maintain an up-to-date inventory system on fire and rescue apparatus and personnel within the area. Compile and forward this information to the respective Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator annually.

### Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator

Organizes and acts as chairperson of an Regional Area Fire and Rescue Coordinating Committee, composed of fire chiefs within the Operational Area. Organize, staff, and equip Regional Fire and Rescue dispatch centers in accordance with the principles enumerated in the *California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan*. Maintain an up-to-date inventory system on fire and rescue apparatus and personnel within the area. Compile and forward this information to the State Fire and Rescue Coordinator annually. Evaluates requests for assistance from Area; determines the region resources from the region 'which can prove the timeliest assistance, and initiates appropriate response. Tracks and dispatches State Cal OES fire engines assigned to the Region. Keeps the Cal OES Regional Assistant Chief apprised of activities occurring within the Region.

## State Fire and Rescue Coordinator

The Chief, Fire and Rescue Division, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, is the State Fire and Rescue Coordinator. Prepares, maintains and distributes the basic *California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan*. Develops and maintains a "Fire and Rescue Emergency Operations Plan" and "Standard Operating Procedure\*" for the use and dispatch of Cal OES Fire and Rescue personnel, apparatus, and other fire and rescue resources. Keeps the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the California Emergency Council informed of current fire and rescue issues, policy matters, and proposed changes in the *California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan*.

### **Procedures (See. attachment A for Request Process)**

Local Fire and Rescue Resources: Local fire chief determines need and activates local fire and rescue mutual aid plan. Based upon an incremental and progressive system of mobilization, resources are available through automatic and/or day-to-day mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions. Notification must be made to the Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator upon activation of local agreements for determining resource availability for subsequent responses.

Operational Area Fire and Rescue Resources: Are made available to participating agencies through the approved and adopted Operational Area Fire and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan.

Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator: Must be notified of resources committed by the Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator.

Regional Fire and Rescue Resources: Mobilization of regional fire and rescue resources is initiated by a request from an Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator. The Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator must notify the Chief, Cal OES, Fire and Rescue Division, of resources committed.

Inter-Regional Fire and Rescue Resources: Inter-regional fire and rescue mutual aid is mobilized through the Cal OES Fire and Rescue Coordinator in the afflicted mutual aid region. Selection of region(s) from which resources are to be drawn is made by the State Fire and Rescue Coordinator, in consideration of the imminence of threat to life and property and conditions existing in various regions. Fire and rescue forces will be mobilized in the strike team mode for inter-regional fire and rescue mutual aid response. The Regional Fire and Rescue Coordinator requesting aid must specify the number, kind, and type of strike teams and support resources desired utilizing the Multi-Agency Coordination System resource ordering form (MACS Form 420).

Dispatch Center: Fire and rescue dispatch centers must be carefully selected and adequately equipped for emergency operations. They should be located in a facility staffed with competent personnel and equipment, which permit 24-hour-per-day communications with all fire and rescue agencies within their area of operation.

Cal OES Assistant Chiefs: Primary responsibility is the effective implementation and operation of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan. Assistant Chiefs represent the Chief, State Fire and Rescue Coordinator and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, in all aspects of their duties, within their respective geographic regions. Assistant Chiefs establish effective working relationships with the Regional and Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinators, and local fire service agencies and solicit the necessary cooperation and support for all aspects of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan. The Assistant Chief is also charged with the responsibility of supervising the joint agreement between local jurisdictions and the State for assignment of Cal OES Fire and Rescue equipment and apparatus. On-scene duties and responsibilities of the Assistant Chief include gathering information and intelligence for the Governor's Office, establishing contact between all elements of federal, state, and local fire and rescue officials. In addition, the Cal OES Assistant Chief functions in a liaison role representing local government resources at the Incident. The Cal OES Assistant Chief also coordinates the movement of inter-regional fire and rescue resources and ensures the proper demobilization of all local government and Cal OES resources and equipment.

### **Urban Search and Rescue Program**

Cal OES is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the state and federal US&R Response System, which includes eight multi-disciplinary Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces in California. The Task Forces are sponsored by local government agencies, and are made up of 62 highly-skilled members, who are trained and equipped to perform search, rescue, medical, and technical functions. At this time, the eight California Task Forces are sponsored by fire departments.

Cal OES is the point of contact for mobilization and mission assignments for the eight Task Forces. In addition to California responses, the eight Task Forces can be mobilized to any location in the United States or its territories for US&R operations, through a tri-party agreement between local sponsoring agencies, the State, and FEMA. No more than four task forces will be dispatched outside California at any one time in order to maintain effective resource readiness within the state. The Task Forces' Regional and Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinators are kept informed of the current deployment status through the Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. (See attachment B)

### **S.A.F.E. Act (State Assistance for Fire Equipment)**

The S.A.F.E. Act became law on January 1, 1988. The Act authorizes the Director of Cal OES to implement and operate two different programs, both designed to assist local agencies, particularly those local agencies located in rural areas of the state, in acquiring firefighting vehicles and related equipment. The Director has delegated the management of these programs to the Cal OES Fire and Rescue Division.

### **S.A.F.E. Act Resale Program**

The Fire Vehicle Resale Program provides that Cal OES may purchase used firefighting vehicles, repair and refurbish the vehicles as needed, then resell the vehicles to any

city, county, special district, joint powers agency, or volunteer fire company which provides fire suppression services. Cal OES will provide limited financing to qualified local agencies which serve rural areas of the state. S.A.F.E. Act Information System

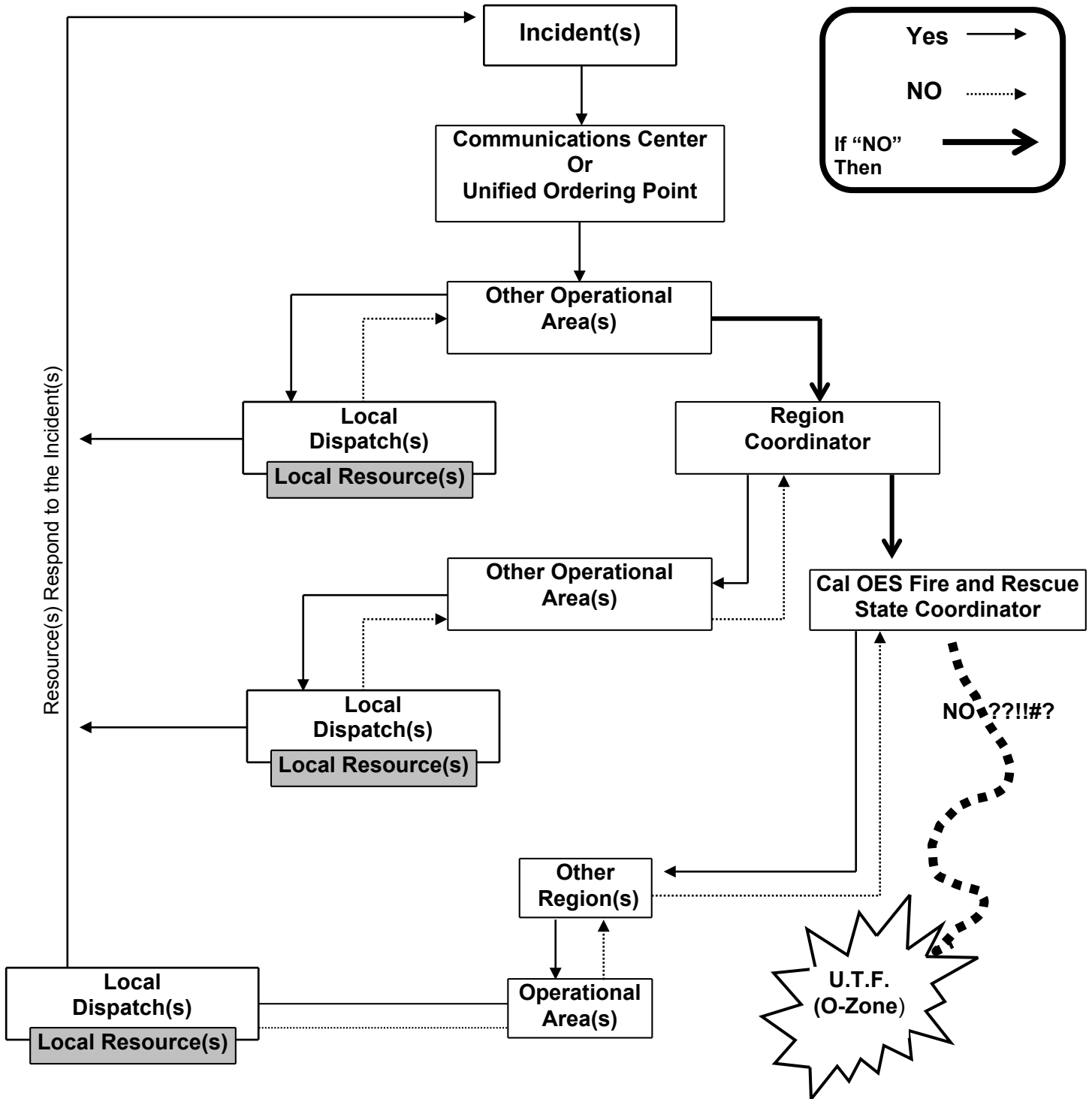
The Information (locator) System is designed to identify firefighting vehicles and related equipment currently offered for sale within the fire community (statewide). Cal OES will periodically mail an advertisement brochure listing all available vehicular equipment offered for sale to any agency requesting the brochure.

## **Attachments**

1. Attachment A - Mutual Aid System Request Process
2. Attachment B - "In State" procedure for Ordering State/National Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces
3. History and Organization
4. California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan
5. Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System
6. Election Process
7. California Fire Assistance Agreement
8. Fire and Rescue Division Assistant Chief
9. Urban Search and Rescue Program
10. The S.A.F.E. Act
11. Cal OES Search and Rescue Model Memorandum of Understanding
12. Cal OES Search and Rescue Model Operating Plan
13. Cal OES Mutual Aid Video

# Attachment A

## California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System Request Process

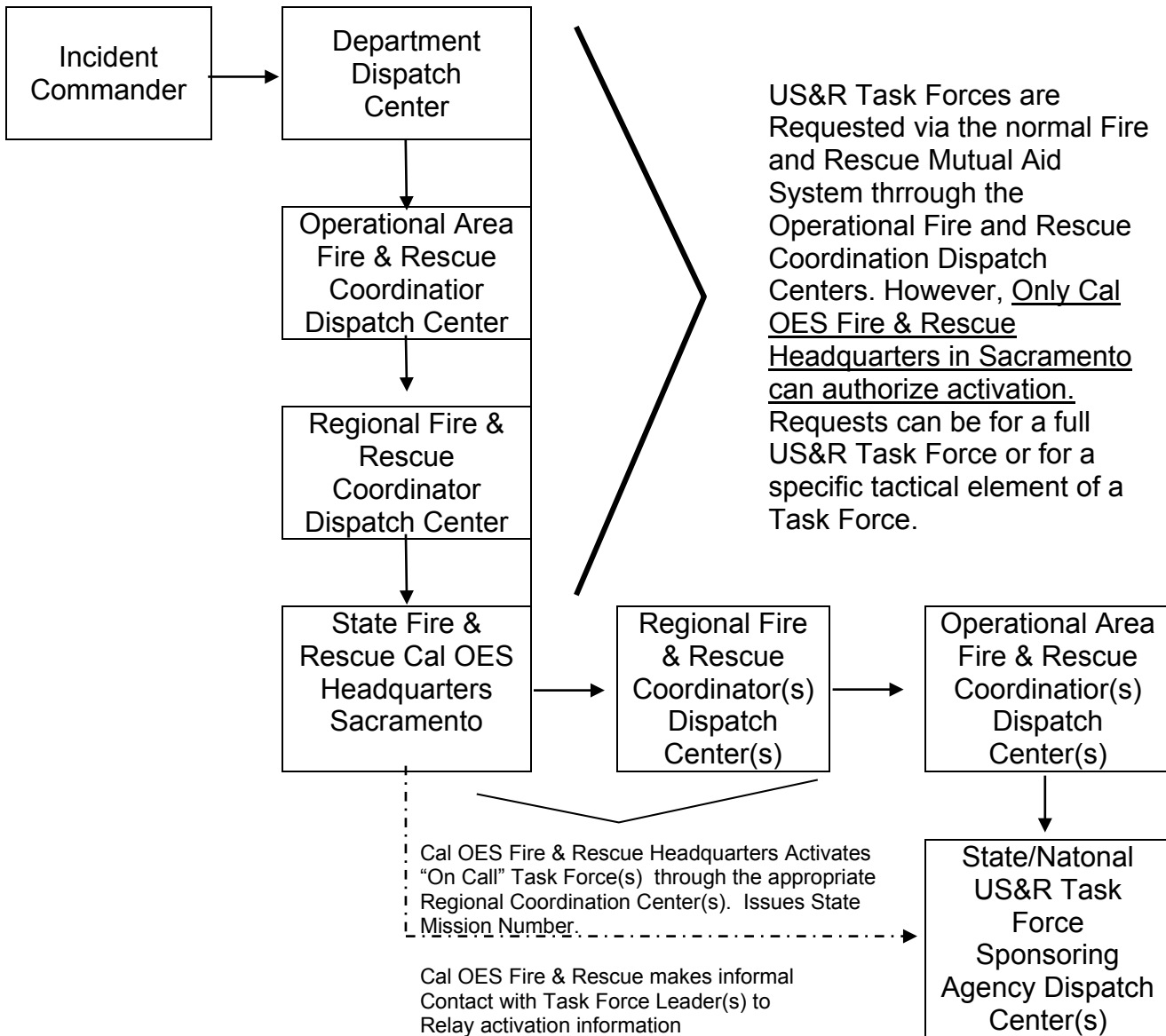


# Attachment B

## CALIFORNIA FIRE AND RESCUE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM

Procedures for ordering State/ National Urban Search and rescue Task Forces

### *“In State Requests”*



## RESOURCE ORDERING & REQUEST INFORMATION

- TYPE AND NATURE OF INCIDENT OR POTENTIAL SITUATION.
- NUMBER &TYPE OF US&R RESOURCE(S) REQUESTED.  
(Full Task Force or Specialized Element)

(Cal OES will indicate requested Task Force(s) by Agency Name and Task Force Number)

- REQUESTING AGENCY(Order and Request Number If Applicable).
- STATE MISSION NUMBER.
- REPORTING LOCATION
- MUTUAL AID OR TACTICAL RADIO FREQUENCY.
- REQUESTING AGENCY PHONE NUMBER OR ICP CELL PHONE NUMBER